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REASON & REVELATION

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Are **Bible** “Contradictions” **REAL?**

A close-up photograph of a wooden gavel with a brass band, resting on a surface. In the background, a pair of brass scales of justice is visible, slightly out of focus. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a sense of gravity and justice.

Turmoil in

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Dealing Fairly with Alleged Bible Contradictions

[Part 1]

Eric Lyons, M.Min.

THROUGH the centuries, people have attempted to justify their rejection of the inspiration of the Bible for a number of different reasons. Some have assumed that the Bible is uninspired ever since their parents taught them as children that it was merely a product of ancient man. Others have never read the Bible nor studied any of the proofs for its divine origin. Their chosen road of disbelief may stem more from indifference than anything else. Some have rejected the Bible because most of the professed adherents that they know act ungodly, divisively, or hypocritically. Others simply have no desire to live according to the will of God, and do not want to be told by Jesus, His apostles, or the prophets what to do. These individuals refuse to believe because if they did, they might feel compelled to give up their pleasurable, immoral activities.

Perhaps the most frequently cited reason in the 21st century why individuals reject the Bible's claim of inspiration is because of presumed contradictions in Scripture. It is alleged that the Bible writers made numerous mistakes in their writings, often contradicting either what another biblical penman wrote or some known historical, geographical, or scientific fact. A plethora of books and Web sites dedicated to trumpeting "Bible contradictions" have been published in recent years. For example, in his book *The Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy*, Dennis McKinsey stated:

Every analyst of the Bible should realize that the Book is a veritable miasma of contradictions, inconsistencies,

inaccuracies, poor science, bad math, inaccurate geography, immoralities, degenerate heroes, false prophecies, boring repetitions, childish superstitions, silly miracles, and dry-as-dust discourse. But contradictions remain the most obvious, the most potent, the most easily proven, and the most common problem to plague the Book (1995, p. 71).

Mike Davis, author of *The Atheist's Introduction to the New Testament*, claimed in the first three pages of his book:

When I started to study the New Testament seriously...I found it to be filled with more contradictions and inconsistencies than I ever imagined or remembered from my days in Baptist Sunday School...[Y]ou can use the Bible to prove that the Bible itself is untrustworthy. If you are familiar with these biblical flaws, you can easily prevail in any debate with the typical Christian fundamentalist....

The basic writings of the Christian religion are so full of absurdity, contradiction and discord that the only way to maintain the truth of Christian doctrine is to ignore the Bible itself. Fortunately for most Christian churches, this is not a problem, because most Christians do not read the Bible seriously, and are woefully unaware of its contents, except for what their preachers tell them on Sunday mornings (2008, pp. 1-3).

In the introduction to his popular Web site, *The Skeptic's Annotated Bible*, Steve

Wells contends that "contradictions and false prophecies show that the Bible is not inerrant.... It is time for us all to stop believing in, or pretending to believe in, a book that is so unworthy of belief" (2013). Dan Barker, co-president of the Freedom from Religion Foundation and one of America's most popular atheists, wrote in his book *godless*: "People who are free of theological bias notice that the bible contains hundreds of discrepancies.... [N]o honest person can pretend it is a perfect book.... [C]ontradictions underscore the fact that, on balance, the bible is not a reliable source of truth" (2008, pp. 222,242).

For example, allegedly Jesus was mistaken when He stated 2,000 years ago that "this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34). [According to Mike Davis, "Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he's speaking to passes away.... It's been 2000 years now since that generation passed away.... Jesus was wrong" (p. 1).] Supposedly, since Matthew wrote that "the robbers" (plural) reviled Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:44), while Luke wrote that "**one** of the criminals" blasphemed Jesus (Luke 23:39, *emp. added*), either Matthew or Luke was mistaken (see Wells). And, since Jesus claimed that Zechariah was the "son of Berechiah" (Matthew 23:35), while the chronicler referred to "Zechariah the son of Jehoiada" (2 Chronicles 24:20), Jesus must have made another mistake (see McKinsey, 2000, p. 30).

On and on they go. One presumed contradiction after another is listed. Page after page of "Bible discrepancies" is published on-line or in print. Just five years after Dennis McKinsey released his 550-page *Encyclopedia of Biblical Errancy* (1995), he penned an **850-page** reference guide titled *Biblical Errancy*—a volume that purports to address "virtually every significant topic of Scripture containing errors, contradictions, and fallacies, delineating the problems within each" (2000, p. 13).

To unbelievers, Bible "errors" are one of the main reasons, if not the chief reason, why they have rejected the Bible as God's

Word. A few years ago, a gentleman wrote Apologetics Press mentioning why he became an unbeliever: "The turning point for me," he said, "was when I realized that the Bible was not inerrant." Another gentleman contacted us some time ago, identified himself as a non-Christian, and indicated that "these Bible discrepancies are one of the biggest factors of my still not being a Christian." In reaction to a 2010 article that atheist John Loftus wrote on why he rejects the Bible, one responder said, "The chief reason I do not believe the Bible is God's 'Word' is because of biblical errancy. I believe that there are numerous contradictions, errors, and failed prophecies in the Bible" (quoted in Loftus, 2010).

Although some Christians have incorrectly argued that inerrancy is not inherent in the inspiration of the Scriptures and that debating the matter is harmful to the cause of Christ (cf. Cukrowski, et al., 2002, p. 44), the fact is (as the skeptic knows all too well), if the Bible writers made mistakes—if they contradicted each others' accounts—then the Bible originated in the mind of men, not God (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21). One of the first things that any honest truth-seeker would want to know, if someone came to him claiming to be in possession of revelation from God, is if the "revelation" was factually accurate. The fallibility of the message would be the first indication that it was man-made and not Heaven-sent (see Lyons and Miller, 2004 for more information). On the other hand, factual accuracy would be the first thing to expect from any document claiming to be God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).

The skeptic has logically argued that, if the "inspired" apostles and prophets made mistakes in their writings, then they were not guided "by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Where skeptics have gravely erred, however, is concluding that the Bible writers made mistakes. In truth, the "contradictions" that the Bible writers supposedly made are actually mere presumptions or misinterpretations on the part of the reader. Anyone truly attempting to understand the Bible or any work of antiquity must consider some basic principles of interpretation

that allow for a reasonable treatment of the work under consideration. In order to be as fair with the Bible writers as we would want others to be with us, the following rules of interpretation must be implemented. Without such principles in place, a fair and just understanding of the Scriptures is hopeless.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

#1—Bible Writers are Innocent Until Proven Guilty

IMAGINE how chaotic life would be if we presumed that everything anyone ever said or did was dishonest. If we assumed that everything our parents told us was a lie, we might have drunk Drano® or overdosed on prescription medicine, which they said would kill us. If we supposed that everything we learned about history was a lie, we would never be able to build upon the advancements of past generations. If we lived every day under the assumption that everyone with whom we communicate is lying to us about everything, life would be virtually unlivable.

Generally speaking, people understand the importance of the principle of being "innocent until proven guilty." A teacher cannot justifiably assume that a student who makes a perfect score on a test without studying for it, cheated. It might be

that he had received all of the information elsewhere at another time. It could be that he learned everything well enough in class that he did not have to study at home. Or, it may be that he simply "got lucky" and guessed correctly on the questions he did not know. A teacher could not justifiably punish such a student without evidence that the student cheated. A policeman is not justified in assuming that because a murder was committed by a man wearing green tennis shoes, then the first person the policeman finds wearing green tennis shoes is the murderer.

In our daily lives, we generally consider a person to be **truthful** until we have actual **evidence** that he or she has lied. If a secretary informs a caller that her boss is on vacation, yet the caller receives a detailed e-mail from that boss only an hour later about a work-related matter, is the caller justified in concluding that the secretary is a liar? Not at all. (How many people work while on vacation?) The boss could actually even be in the building for some reason, but still actually be taking "vacation days." (How many of us have stopped by the work place for an extended amount of time while "on vacation"?) Suppose someone asks you where you are going, and you respond by saying, "I'm going home." However, on the way home you stop to get milk and eggs at the grocery store. If

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the same person who asked you that question sees you at the grocery store, would he be right to conclude that you lied because on your way home you stopped by the store? Certainly not! The fact is, most conscientious, reasonable people understand that we are “innocent until proven guilty,” and that false allegations are reprehensible.

We give people the benefit of the doubt and generally consider them to be truthful about a matter unless we have evidence to the contrary. When we read a historical document or book, the same rule should apply. The writing is considered to be truthful until it can be proven otherwise. Do we have proof that an author of antiquity was lying or mistaken about a matter? If not, we should be careful about falsely accusing the writer. William Arndt properly argued:

The *apriori* assumption must always be that the author has not contradicted himself. This rule is observed in dealing with secular authors. At what pains, for instance, have not editors been to bring about agreement between seemingly conflicting statements in the writings of Plato! The principle by which they were guided was that **no contradiction must be assumed unless all attempts at harmonizing fail**. That is in accordance with the dictates of fairness. Let but the same amount of good will be manifested in the treatment of the difficult passages in the Bible (1955, p. vii, emp. added).

A book is to be presumed internally consistent until it can be shown conclusively that it is contradictory. This approach has been accepted throughout literary history, and is still accepted today in most venues. (You cannot expect to have a coherent ancient history class using Herodotus, Thucydides, Josephus, etc. if you presume that they were all liars.) Respected 19th-century Harvard law professor, Simon Greenleaf, dealt with this principle in his book, *The Testimony of the Evangelists: The Gospels Examined by the Rules of Evidence*:

The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings,

whether documentary or otherwise; and as it comes first in order, in the prosecution of these inquiries, it may, for the sake of mere convenience, be designated as our first rule: “Every document, apparently ancient, coming from the proper repository or custody, and bearing on its face no evident marks of forgery, **the law presumes to be genuine, and devolves on the opposing party the burden of proving it to be otherwise**” (1995, p. 16, emp. added).

Indeed, the logically accepted way to approach ancient writings is to assume innocence, not guilt. The Bible surely deserves this same treatment.

#2—Possibilities Will Suffice

If a cantankerous co-worker saw you getting \$20 out of the petty cash box at work one Thursday afternoon, would he be justified in immediately notifying everyone in the office that you are a thief? The **only** thing this accuser knows is that you took some cash from the money box at work. He has no idea if the boss gave you permission to get the money. He does not know if you were reimbursing yourself for a purchase you made for the company. He is unaware of any pre-arrangement you may have made with the general manager to use the money on the way into work the next morning to purchase doughnuts for everyone in the office. All that this irritable colleague knows is that (1) he doesn’t like you and (2) here is “reason” you should be fired.

Most anyone who considers such a scenario quickly sees how immoral it would be to jump to such a conclusion. Why? Because there are many possibilities why you might honestly and legitimately be taking \$20 from the company’s petty cash drawer. Without further information and adequate evidence, the legitimate possibility of your innocence must be presumed until actually proven guilty. If a person or a historical document (e.g., the Bible) must be considered “innocent until proven guilty,” then, without further evidence, any **possible** answer should suffice.

Suppose that video footage of you taking the \$20 was made available 50 years after your death and no one was alive who could verify one way or another about

your innocence or guilt. Yet, since the owner of the video has an axe to grind with your grandchildren, he posts the video on the Internet and labels your grandchildren as descendants of a thief. Again, no fair and just person would think that such an act was right. Why? Because even though no one on Earth knew about the circumstances surrounding the \$20, they knew that there were many legitimate **possible** reasons why you may have taken the money honestly.

Since the apostles and prophets and those to whom they originally wrote have now been dead for at least 1,900 years, when questions arise about what they wrote, it obviously is impossible to ask them what they meant. Although we might like to know why Matthew worded something one way and Luke another way, we may never know for sure. The pertinent question is: “Is it genuinely possible for both accounts to be true?”

For example, Matthew and Mark wrote that “the robbers” (plural) reviled Jesus on the cross (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32). Luke, on the other hand, mentioned that “**one** of the criminals” blasphemed Jesus (Luke 23:39, emp. added). Luke’s account is obviously different than Matthew and Mark’s, but is it necessarily contradictory? In other words, is it possible for all of these accounts to be true?

Consider two real possibilities for the differences concerning the thieves who were hanged alongside Jesus. First, it is quite possible that, initially, both thieves reviled Christ, but then one of them repented. After hearing Jesus’ words on the cross, and seeing His forgiving attitude, the one thief may have been driven to acknowledge that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. How many times have we made a statement about someone or something, but then retracted the statement only a short while later after receiving more information?

A second possible explanation for the differences involves the understanding of a figure of speech known as synecdoche. Merriam-Webster defines this term as “a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as *fifty sail* for *fifty ships*), the whole for a part (as *society* for *high society*)... or the name of the material for the thing

made (as *boards for stage*)” (2013, italics, in orig.). Just as Bible writers frequently used figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, sarcasm, and metonymy, they also used synecdoche. As seen in the definition of synecdoche, this figure of speech can be used in a variety of ways (Dungan, 1888, pp. 300-309):

- A whole can be put for the part.
- A part may be put for the whole.
- Time might be put for part of a time.
- The singular can be put for the plural.
- The plural can be put for the singular.

It is feasible that Matthew and Mark were using the plural in place of the singular in their accounts of the thieves reviling Christ on the cross. Lest you think that such might be an isolated case, notice two other places in Scripture where the same form of synecdoche is used.

- Genesis 8:4 indicates that Noah’s ark rested “on the **mountains** of Ararat.” Question: Did the ark rest on one of the mountains of Ararat, or did it rest on all of them at the same time? Although the ark was a huge vessel, it obviously did not rest on the many mountains of Ararat; rather, it rested on one.
- In Genesis 21:7 Sarah asked, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse **children**? For I have borne him a son in his old age.” Anyone who knows much about the Bible recalls that Sarah had but **one** child. In certain contexts, however, one might use a synecdoche and speak of one child (as did Sarah) by using the word children. Often, when I call for the attention of my children, I refer to them as “boys and **girls**.” I have two sons, but I actually only have one daughter. However, summoning my children with the expression “boys and **girl**” simply does not flow as well as “boys and **girls**.” Thus, I frequently use the plural (“girls”) for the singular (“girl”). But in the way that I use the expression, **the emphasis is not on the singularity or plurality of the nouns, but on the particular categories** (“boys” and “girls”).

It could very well be that Matthew and Mark focused on the **categories** of people from whom the taunts came rather than the actual number of the people in those categories. Matthew mentions how “those who passed by” (27:39), the soldiers (27:27), the scribes, elders, and chief priests (27:41), and “even the robbers” (27:44) all taunted Jesus. Thus Christ’s mockers came from various **classes of people**—including thieves (even though only one may have taunted Jesus).

Again, the conscientious Bible student does not have to pin down the exact answer to an alleged contradiction; he only needs to show one or more legitimate **possibilities** of harmonization in order to remove the initial sting of any “contradiction.” Regarding the thieves who died with Jesus, the skeptic cannot deny that both of the previous explanations are plausible answers to the question of why Matthew and Mark wrote of “thieves” reviling Christ, instead of a “thief.”

Which of these possible explanations is correct? In the absence of more information, a definite answer is likely impossible. However, both answers possess merit. Either one is sufficient to answer the charge of error. Over a century ago, the reputable Bible scholar and gospel preacher J.W. McGarvey commented on this point as follows:

We are not bound to show the truth of the given hypothesis; but only that it may be true. If it is at all possible, then it is possible that no contradiction exists; if it is probable, then it is probable that no contradiction exists.... It follows, also, that when there is an appearance of contradiction between two writers, **common justice requires that before we pronounce one or both of them false we should exhaust our ingenuity in searching for some probable supposition on the ground of which they may both be true.** The better the general reputation of the writers, the more imperative is this obligation, lest we condemn as false those who are entitled to respectful consideration (1886, 2:32, emp. added).

One Bible antagonist cited a rather easy-to-explain alleged discrepancy and then proceeded to compare the Bible to a “cheating husband” who “has been caught in a contradiction, exposed as a liar, and therefore can’t be trusted to tell the truth” (Smith, 1995; cf. Lyons, 2004). In truth, however, the burden of proof was on the Bible critic to verify his allegations and he did not. One must remember how equally deplorable it is to draw up charges of marital unfaithfulness when there is no proof of such. In reality, the Bible should be likened to a faithful husband who has been wrongfully accused of infidelity by prejudiced, overbearing skeptics whose case is based upon unproven assumptions. The Bible is innocent until **proven** guilty. And no guilt has ever been proven. On the contrary, legitimate **possible** explanations exist for the difficult passages of Scripture.

#3—Context is Critical

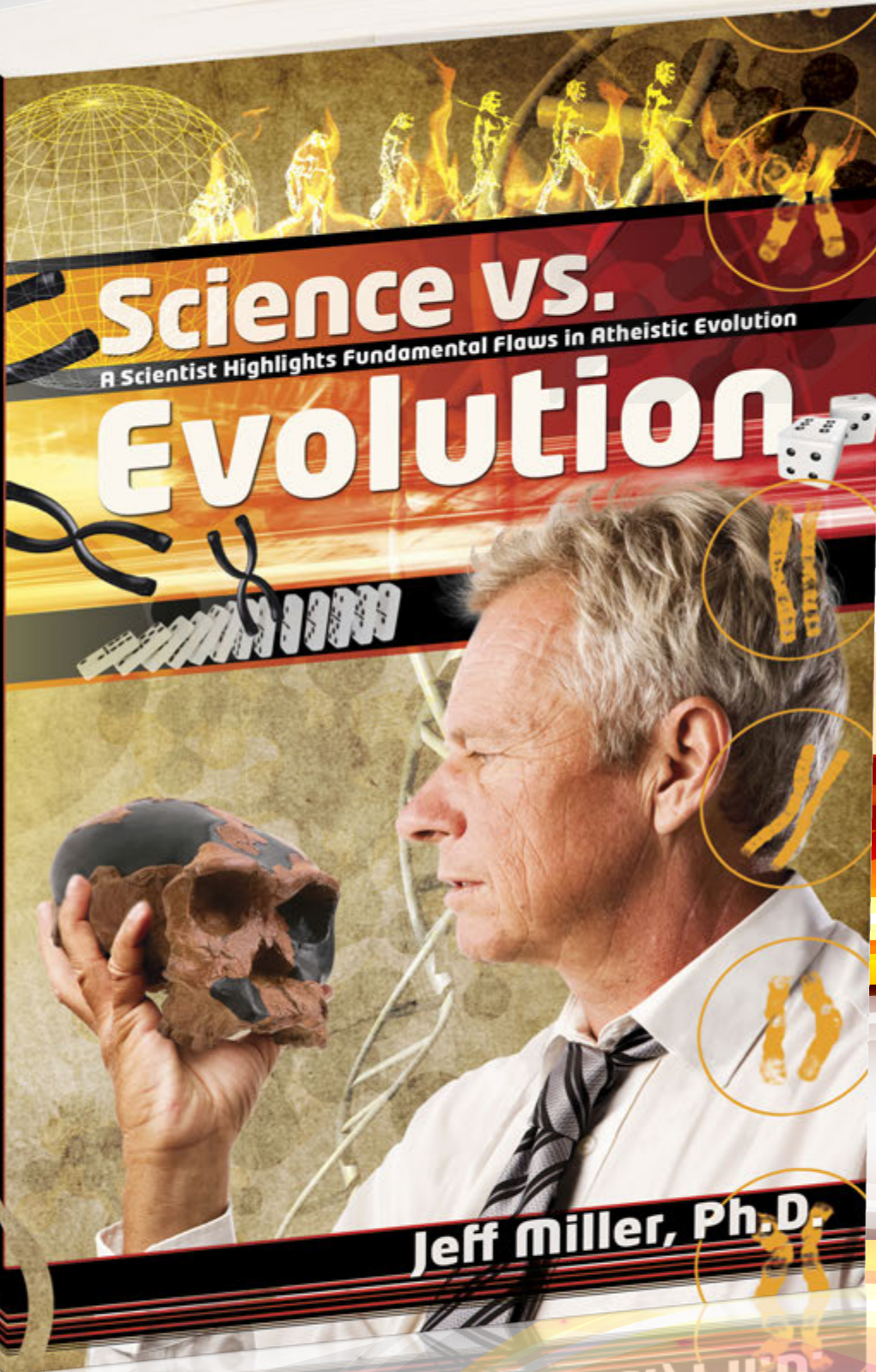
Effective communication is impossible without the participants taking into consideration the context in which statements are made. What does a mother mean when, while witnessing her son score his 30th point in a basketball game, she yells to her fireman husband, “Our son is on fire!”? She obviously doesn’t want her courageous husband to run onto the court with a fire extinguisher to “put out” their son. Later that evening, however, when the son is grilling steaks in the backyard, the mother screams those same words to her husband after seeing the propane tank explode in her son’s face. What does she mean now? Likely the husband will have no problem quickly understanding the message, given the context in which it was made.

In our daily lives both Christians and skeptics generally understand the importance of interpreting one another’s statements within the explicitly stated or implied contexts. When it comes to properly and fairly interpreting the Scriptures, however, Bible critics (and sadly even some believers) often either ignore or dismiss the actual context(s) in which the verses in question are found. Consider, for example, the very first paragraph of Mike Davis’s book *The Atheist’s Introduction to the New Testament: How*

(cont. on p. 116)

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the Bible Undermines the Basic Teachings of Christianity:

For me, Matthew 24:34 was the smoking gun. It proved to me that Christianity could not possibly be true. End of story. Case closed. It's the verse where Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he's speaking to passes away—meaning that some of them would still be alive when the sun went dark, the stars fell from the sky, and Jesus came riding down from the heaven on clouds of glory. It's been nearly 2000 years now since that generation passed away, and the sun is still shining, the stars still twinkle in the sky, and clouds arrive with no passengers from heaven, glorious or otherwise. For me, this sealed the issue. Jesus was wrong. Therefore, he could not have been divine, but just a guy, preaching what he believed in, and no more deserving of our belief than any other guy (2008, p. 1).

Is Davis correct? Did Jesus err when he predicted "this generation [His generation—EL] will by no means pass away till all these things take place"? According to Davis, since "Jesus tells his listeners that the judgment day will come before the generation he's speaking to passes away," and since that generation passed away 1,900 years ago, "the Bible itself is untrustworthy" and Jesus "could not have been divine" (pp. 1-2).

In actuality, what Davis confesses ultimately "proved" to him that the Bible and Jesus are unreliable is nothing more than a misinterpretation of Scripture—a failure to consider the context in which Jesus spoke. Jesus was **not** mistaken in His comments in Matthew 24:34—Jesus' generation did not pass away prior to witnessing the things Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:4-34. But, Jesus did **not** foretell in those verses what Davis **assumes** He foretold. Davis and many others believe that, prior to verse 34, Jesus was describing events that would take place shortly before Judgment Day at the end of time. The fact of the matter is, however, Jesus was prophesying about the coming

destruction upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and not the final Judgment.

When the disciples went to show Jesus the temple buildings (Matthew 24:1), Jesus said, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (24:2). Later, when Jesus was on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Him two questions, beginning with "when will these things be?" (24:3). In verses 4-34, Jesus responded to this first question, revealing several signs that would indicate Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, including the temple, was near. [NOTE: "The fall of the Hebrew system is set forth in the sort of apocalyptic nomenclature that is characteristic of Old Testament literature, e.g., when the prophets pictorially portray the overthrow of Jehovah's enemies (cf. Isaiah 13:10-11; 34:2ff; Ezekiel 32:7-8)" (Jackson, n.d.); cf. Matthew 24:29-31; see also Miller, 2003.] Then, in verses 35-51 (and all of chapter 25), Jesus answered the disciples' last question: "what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). To summarize, in Matthew 24:4-34 Jesus foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while in 24:35-25:46 He commented on His future return and final Judgment of the world.

How sad it is that so many atheists and skeptics believe they have disproven the Bible and Christianity, when, in reality, they have merely ignored the context of the passage and twisted the biblical text to mean something God never intended (cf. 2 Peter 3:16). The fact that Mike Davis highlights Matthew 24:34 as the verse that once and for all proved to him the Bible is unreliable should tell us something about the extreme weakness of the skeptic's case against Christianity. In truth, when inspired biblical statements are interpreted fairly—within the context in which those statements are found—a host of contradictions will disappear like the morning fog, and sincere truth seekers will see the Bible for what it is: the inerrant Word of God.

[to be continued]

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Turmoil in Scotland Over A.P. Books

Kyle Butt, M.A.

MANY of us were shocked to read an article featured on the front page of Scotland's *The Daily Record* that ran on September 6, 2013. The article was titled: "Parents' Outrage as Extremist US Religious Cult Hand Out Creationist Books and Preach to Kids at Scottish School" (McGivern, 2013). The "extremist US religious cult" under discussion is the church of Christ. The article caused quite a stir, as you can imagine, and provides a case study in unfair, unbalanced, biased reporting, which we will analyze later in this article. Before doing so, consider the background of the events that elicited the article.

Last year Alex Gear, a native of Scotland who preaches at the West Mains church of Christ in East Kilbride, Scotland, visited north Alabama. He gave reports to various congregations, including the Stony Point church of Christ in Florence, AL where I am a member. After meeting Alex, I invited him to my office and asked if any of our Apologetics Press materials could help in his ministry. Alex chose two of our books: *How Do You Know God Is Real?* and *Truth Be Told: Exposing the Myth of Evolution*. He said he could use about 500 copies of each book. He explained that he

had been volunteering as a chaplain in two of the primary schools in Scotland and would like to give the children a copy of each book.

The shipping and printing costs were rather expensive, to the tune of about \$5,000, but one of our donors offered to cover the entire cost of the project. We shipped the books to Scotland over the summer, and Alex had them ready to give to the students when the school year began. The books were not "sneaked" into the school in any way. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The head of the Kirktonholme Primary School in East Kilbride, Sandra Mackenzie, had invited Alex to be a volunteer chaplain at the school approximately eight years ago. Alex and several college students from the States had done numerous projects to help the school and the students over the last eight years. Two weeks before the books were distributed to the children at Kirktonholme, Alex presented the books to Sandra Mackenzie for her approval. Mrs. Mackenzie approved the books to be given away free of charge to the students as a part of the system's religious education classes, and neither she nor Alex did anything illegal.

When the books were given to the children, a few of the parents at the

school complained that their children should not have been exposed to the teaching about God and Creation. They were angry and began to cause a stir. One of those parents happened to be Paul Sanderson, a prominent member of the Scottish Secular Society. From that point, *The Daily Record* picked up the story and created quite a brouhaha.

The Daily Record Article

Mark McGivern, the author of *The Daily Record* article, made a number of blatantly false, outlandish statements and insinuations. First, the title of the article accused the church of Christ of being an "extremist US religious cult" (McGivern, 2013; NOTE: In the on-line version, he changed the title to read "sect" instead of the original wording of "cult."). Anyone remotely familiar with the church of Christ knows that, first, it certainly is not based in the United States. In fact, it was founded in Jerusalem in the first century, spread throughout the world in the centuries that followed, and can now be found across the globe. Since each congregation of the church of Christ is autonomous and self-governing, there is no "base" for the church. One would be just as accurate to say the church is based in Africa, or Scotland, or New Zealand, as to say it is based in the U.S.

Second, the church of Christ is not an extremist cult. Even those fair-minded journalists who read the story, who are not members of the church of Christ, understand the falsity of the cult accusation. For instance, sports writer Bill McMurdo penned an article in response to the *Record* titled "Extreme Prejudice." In that article he stated:

The *Record* has been on a "crusade" of late, denigrating a church in East Kilbride... According to the

Record, the Church of Christ is an “extremist US religious cult.” Well, the bad news is that this church has already infiltrated the highest levels of government. We have actually had a British Prime Minister who grew up in this “cult” and who was influenced by it. Not only that, but this Prime Minister was responsible for leading the nation in a critical time of war. I am referring to David Lloyd George... Not bad for someone from an “extremist US religious cult” eh? Another epic fail for the *Record* (McMurdo, 2013).

He went on to include a statement from the West Mains congregation in which they stated: “The Church of Christ has a rich heritage dating as far back as 1669 in Britain. The Church of Christ is considered a mainstream church throughout the British Isles” (McMurdo). McMurdo ended his article by stating that Secular Scotland seems to be targeting the church, noting that their agenda, which “incorporates persecuting people who have an active faith is deplorable” (2013). The church of Christ cannot in any legitimate way be called an “extremist US religious cult.”

In addition, the *Record* put a picture with the article of a college student named Jared Blakeman. His face was painted to look like Jack Sparrow from the Disney movie *Pirates of the Caribbean*. The insinuation was that this was part of the “ministry” of the West Mains church. The truth, however, was that the picture was taken from Jared’s Facebook account. The face painting was done at a community fun day and had nothing whatsoever to do with anything that was ever done in the school. The posting of the picture was a devious ploy to make the church look bizarre and cultish.

Furthermore, the article insisted that by giving the books to the chil-

dren, the church of Christ was trying to brainwash the kids. To “prove” this point about brainwashing, the father of one of the five-year-old children was interviewed—Paul Sanderson. It just so happens that Sanderson is a key player in the Scottish Secular Society. He said that when he took the books from his son that his son burst into tears. The *Record* then quotes him as saying: “I think it’s fair to call it brainwashing because when I took them from him he started crying. When I asked him why he was crying, he said the man who gave them to him told him they were really, really important.” Notice the argument Sanderson made. The members of the church are brainwashing his child because they gave the child free books that they said were important. The father of the child took the books away, refusing to allow him to read the books, and the child starts crying. This, he concludes, proves brainwashing. (I suppose the banktellers who hand out free suckers to “unsuspecting” five-year-olds are brainwashing them into eating suckers. I’ve seen very few kids relinquish those suckers without some crying involved.) Needless to say, such “penetrating logic” falls far short of proof of brainwashing. In fact, let’s turn the tables and ask this question. Who is more guilty of brainwashing: a person who attempts to give children access to information that they may have never been exposed to, or a parent who forces his child to learn evolution and censors any material to the contrary? Me thinks the lady doth protest too much.

Additional Fall Out

After the *Record* article, numerous other media outlets picked up the story. *The Scotland Herald* ran a piece on it; the *Scotsman* published an article (Gardner, 2013); the *Telegraph*

out of London put their two-cents in (Cramb, 2013); numerous individual bloggers and media pundits chimed in, and even *The London Times*. The head teacher at the school, Sandra MacKenzie, was contacted and asked why she allowed such a thing to happen. She did not back down, but insisted she had done nothing wrong, and stated: “Whilst I appreciate that not every family in our school are practising Christians, I was only too happy to accept this generous gift on your behalf. I hope you will all accept it in the spirit with which it was offered.” As a result of the events, Mrs. Mackenzie and one other teacher at Kirktonholme have been reassigned to different duties while a “full investigation” is underway of their activities. Furthermore, Alex Gear and the West Mains church of Christ have been informed that they can no longer volunteer or work with the school.

Michael Glackin, from *The London Times*, called me Friday, September 13, and asked me if I would be willing to go to Scotland and publicly defend the teaching in the books that were donated. I explained to him that Apologetics Press stands behind all of our materials and I would be more than happy to defend the truth of Creation in Scotland if the opportunity arose. I further explained that the scientific evidence is firmly on the side of Creation. He quoted me as saying: “What the authorities in Scotland seem to want is for children to be given only one side of the argument. Kids are being forced to learn evolution. These people insist on teaching only evolution and yet we are accused of brainwashing, that doesn’t make sense” (Glackin, 2013).

Denominational minister David Robertson had an interesting piece on the whole ordeal. He is not a big fan of the church of Christ, but he

assessed the situation based on the freedoms that are being restricted by the secularist in this case. He stated:

All you need is one militant atheist parent complaining that a teacher or chaplain is a “creationist” or a “homophobe” and the witch-hunt will begin. Why are the media not warning about the danger of militant secularist groups, or indeed militant homosexual groups like Stonewall? In every corridor in my daughter’s school there are Stonewall posters, “some people are gay, get over it.” Fair enough. But where are the “some people are ex-gay, get over it,” or even the “some people are Christian, get over it” posters? Why are these groups infiltrating and indoctrinating our children.... When the secular elites can call a militant mob to stir up hatred and fear, and rely on the compliance of both the tabloid and broadsheet press, I guess we all have to wonder—who is next? What will happen to anyone who dares to challenge the new absolutist state morality? (Robertson, 2013).

Indeed, it seems evident that we are witnessing what will happen to anyone who dares teach the truth in a world of secularism.

Let us be reminded that such opposition to the truth is nothing new. Jesus explained that the world hated Him, and His followers can expect the same treatment (John 15:18). The apostle Paul explained “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Christ’s apostles were commanded by the Jewish leaders to never preach again about Jesus, yet they defied such an unrighteous injunction and continued to preach the truth to all who would listen. When they were accused before the authorities, Peter and the other apostles simply said: “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The Jewish author-

ities beat them and warned them to stop preaching about Jesus. But the Lord’s followers left the assembly “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:41-42). Let those of us who are Christians determine to pray for the Lord’s Church in Scotland, that this situation will turn out for God’s glory and the spreading of the truth. And let us all be unswerving in our determination to spread the truth of the glorious saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in spite of any human opposition.

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NOTE FROM *The Editor*



New Science Book

Apologetics Press has been blessed to provide the public with several outstanding volumes that address the most pressing scientific issues of our day—as they relate to evolution, Creation, and the Bible. These have included *The Truth About Human Origins*, *The Scientific Case for Creation*, and *Creation Compromises*. In addition to the multitude of scholarly articles available on our Web site that discuss scientific issues related to the creation-evolution controversy, we have been in need of a fresh, candid, scientific examination of evolution. We are pleased to announce that this need has now been met.

Our resident scientist, Dr. Jeff Miller, has completed a lengthy analysis in which he methodically examines the laws of science and their implications regarding naturalistic evolution. Discovering fundamental flaws in five of the central tenets of evolution, Dr. Jeff sets forth modern scientific evidence that decisively refutes evolution. In the process, the evidence strongly supports biblical Creation and the existence of God.

Consisting of nearly 300 colorful pages, with pictures, tables, and illustrations, the book also



contains useful author and subject indices for easy reference. Review questions at the end of each chapter make the book conducive to classroom use. A special section of the book consists of six appendices that address 21 of the typical quibbles levied against creationists.

Destined to be a classic, this book is a “must have” for those who desire to withstand the intimidation tactics of evolutionary scientists and college professors who ridicule the Bible’s depiction of origins. All young people, especially high school and college students, need this book. Adults should also arm themselves with the power-packed knowledge this book provides. Christians have nothing to fear from the atheistic, secular attack on the truth of God and His Creation. Indeed, the evidence “declares the glory of God.”

Dave Miller

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